

SCAG Comments on the Draft California Transportation Plan

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE ATTACHMENT #4.4

Thursday, April 3, 2003

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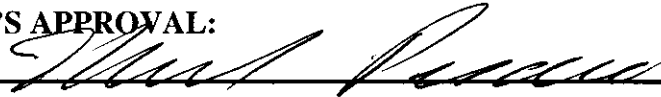
DATE: April 3, 2003

TO: Transportation & Communications Committee

FROM: Bob Huddy, Senior Transportation Planner, SCAG
213-236-1972; huddy@scag.ca.gov

RE: SCAG Comments on the Draft California Transportation Plan 2025

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:



RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to prepare a letter, for signature by the Executive Director conveying SCAG comments to Caltrans on the Draft California Transportation Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is in the process of developing a statewide transportation plan: Connecting Californians-California Transportation Plan 2025 (CTP). The CTP is a visionary document that attempts to provide a statewide transportation vision for 2025. The last CTP was developed in 1993 and updated in 1998. Broadly, the essence of the CTP is contained in three sections. First, the challenges facing the State are laid out, including dramatic growth in travel demand, changing travel behavior, dwindling transportation revenue, and infrastructure expansion lagging behind travel demand. Second, the Plan provides five major goals related to safety, system preservation, mobility and accessibility, efficiency, and community and environmental values. Finally, the plan outlines seven major policies to achieve these goals. The plan, as currently formulated, is not an action plan. It does not contain specific projects or programs/actions. An executive summary of the CTP is attached to this memo for your reference.

Caltrans staff provided a summary presentation of the CTP at the January 2003 TCC meeting. At that time, some of the TCC members expressed concerns about how or whether transportation finance issues are addressed adequately and appropriately in the draft CTP. SCAG staff shares these concerns and recommends communicating these to Caltrans as articulated in the "Comments on the CTP" section below. Caltrans has indicated that the comments on the Draft CTP will be accepted through the end of April 03.

Subsequently, the Highway and Transportation Finance Task Force directed staff to review the plan and present staff comments. Accordingly, staff presented SCAG comments on the CTP on February 20, 2003. The Task Force shared the comments raised by staff, which are outlined below.

Comments on the CTP

- The CTP makes statements on the commitments to relieving traffic congestion and preserving the system that depend upon the Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) that Governor Davis proposed in July 2000. These “commitments” seem to form a significant component of the underlying premise on which the CTP is developed. Yet, there is no substantive discussion on the status of these commitments. Given the current status of the State budget, and the uncertainty with regard to full funding of the TCRP, it is doubtful that these can, at this time, be considered as commitments. These need to be revisited, as an underlying CTP assumption.
- Collaborative planning and decision making were identified as components of a key policy. The discussion of this policy does little to note existing collaborative processes mandated through State and Federal law and regulation. The strategies identified in relation to this policy simply restate the existing State and Regional processes required by established policy. This re-statement creates an impression that these processes are either not already in place, or are somehow not functioning adequately. If there are collaborative processes that may need improvement, there is little that specifically points to those perceived or actual deficiencies or recommendations for improvements.
- Issues of finance and funding are identified, and the serious and continuing erosion of transportation funding is noted as a significant problem. The Draft CTP does not offer direction or the necessary policy actions or strategies to alleviate the funding problem. The CTP mentions the role of local funding sources, including local sales taxes, in meeting the needs of the multi-modal transportation system, but the analysis of the issues associated with local financing is also quite limited. Increased private sector investment in transportation is identified as a potential funding strategy, as are user-based funding mechanisms, which are consistent with broad principles in the RTP. Details on what those mechanisms might be, or the level of effort necessary to meet future maintenance and capacity enhancement are lacking.
- The issue of financial resources lacks much specific connection to policy and decision-making processes referred to in Policy 1. Clearly, there does exist a situation of economic and financial uncertainty in the funding processes that creates uncertainty in the existing decision making processes. This financial uncertainty does result in impacts to things like project delivery, and the ability to meet conformity requirements in National Ambient Air Quality Standards. These connections between financial uncertainty and “Collaborative planning and decision making” should be identified.
- Changes in strategic directions to implement the goals and policies are contained in the draft CTP document, but there is little to focus on which policies and strategies would be priorities. The magnitude of expected growth and demand upon the transportation system, limitations on resources, and many competing public values to be balanced are well

REPORT

documented, but not well linked back to what policies and strategies should receive priority in dealing with them.

Next Steps

SCAG staff will continue to monitor the development of the CTP process, update the TCC, and seek further direction, as appropriate.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding to review and comment on the CTP are contained in the FY 02/03 OWP, no new fiscal impacts.

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CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the next two decades, California is expected to add another 11 million new residents, reaching a total population of 45 million by 2020¹. How will state, regional, and local governments and the private sector meet California's growing demand for transportation? The draft **California Transportation Plan 2025** (CTP) explores the social, economic, and technological trends and demographic changes anticipated over the next 20 years and their potential influence on travel behavior. The plan then presents goals, policies, and strategies to address the projected demand for transportation services.

The draft CTP proposes a balanced approach to the projected increase in demand for mobility and accessibility. It seeks to guide transportation investments that benefit our economy, support our communities, and safeguard our environment.

Prior to developing the draft CTP, we asked Californians to share their transportation concerns. The draft CTP reflects the public concerns expressed during an early public participation program, guidance from transportation experts, providers and decision makers, and was refined by a multi-disciplinary policy advisory group. Details of the public participation and outreach efforts are contained in Appendix IV to the draft CTP.

The release of this draft signals the beginning of the public review and comment of the draft CTP. Transportation users, providers, and decision and policy makers will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft CTP in numerous forums, and through questionnaires, comments cards, and the CTP website. The public's participation and comments will help shape this plan and, most importantly, California's future transportation system.

Long-Term Commitments

The results of the early public participation revealed that we, as Californians, are committed to making this state the best place to live, work, play, and visit. We are proud of our state, but have concerns about our future. We are concerned about our children and our ability to safely access the economic, educational, cultural, and social opportunities we desire, and the services we need. We are concerned about population growth and its impacts on traffic congestion, the environment, our communities, and our quality of life.

California's leaders and voters have demonstrated their commitment to address these concerns. The CTP builds upon the foundation established over the past several years to improve the state's infrastructure and end

¹ Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, County Population Projections with Age, Sex, and Race/Ethnic Detail, December 1998.

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decades of disinvestments. The following are examples of California's commitment to the future:

Commitment to Safety and Security

In 1999, Governor Gray Davis signed into law the Safe Routes to School Program, a major pedestrian safety grant program specifically targeted to improve the safety of school children. The funds can be used for bicycle lanes, sidewalks, traffic signs, crosswalks, and traffic calming measures. The first year generated \$130 million in grant applications.

Californians demonstrated their commitment to safety by having the nation's highest rate of seatbelt and child safety seat usage in 2001. The state received the only "A" grade from the National Safety Council and the National SAFE KIDS Campaign for its occupant protection laws.

Commitment to Relieving Traffic Congestion

In July 2000, Governor Gray Davis initiated the Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP). The TCRP, dedicating the state's portion of sales tax on gasoline to transportation for seven years, provides over \$5 billion in new funds for high-priority projects to relieve congestion and improve goods movement, and \$1.4 billion for local streets and road maintenance and transit operations. The TCRP represents the single largest investment in transportation infrastructure improvements in the state's history.

In March 2002, Californians voted two-to-one in favor of Proposition 42 to continue the transportation improvements initiated by the TCRP. Proposition 42 permanently dedicates the state's portion of sales tax on gasoline to transportation improvements and is expected to generate an additional \$35 billion for transportation projects during the first 20 years.

Commitment to Preserving the System

The Governor's commitment to preserve the existing transportation system initiated by the TCRP was continued by the voters with the approval of Proposition 42. The state's cities and counties will receive 20 percent of Proposition 42 resources for maintaining their local streets and roads.

Californians demonstrated their commitment to preserving and maintaining the system by participating in the Adopt-A-Highway Program. 40,000 participants representing 4,700 groups volunteered to pickup trash, plant trees and wildflowers, remove graffiti, and maintain traveler information centers at roadside rest areas. In 2001, volunteers picked up nearly 210,000 bags of trash from California's roadsides.

Commitment to the Economy

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In 2002, California launched a record \$7 billion in transportation projects, providing approximately 182,000 jobs and nearly \$20 billion in economic stimulus.

The \$2.4 billion Alameda Corridor rail cargo expressway was completed in 2002. The project, linking the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles to transcontinental rail yards was developed through a public and private collaboration. The corridor will improve distribution of approximately \$300 billion in trade, relieve congestion, reduce noise and air pollution, and improve safety. However, the trade benefits on the Alameda Corridor cannot be fully realized until capacity on the Alameda Corridor-East to San Bernardino County has been increased. The TCRP provides \$273 million towards safety and signal improvements and grade separations to help relieve congestion and improve operations on this critical trade corridor.

"More than ever, transportation is the critical link between California and economic success in the 21st century. We need to invest money, yes, but we need to do it wisely."

GOVERNOR GRAY DAVIS

Commitment to Communities

In 2001, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) adopted a Context Sensitive Solution policy providing for innovative approaches that integrate and balance community, aesthetic, historic, and environmental values with transportation safety, maintenance, and performance goals. The policy promotes creative and collaborative problem-solving to make projects better reflect their surroundings.

During a freeway project to close the gap on Interstate 15 in San Diego, local communities and neighborhoods, Caltrans, and the San Diego Association of Governments collaborated to meet the needs of those people affected by the project. As a result, 11 over-crossings were designed to knit neighborhoods together by providing pedestrian and bicyclist circulation and open space for parks, plazas, bridges, and retail buildings.

Commitment to the Environment

In July 2002, Governor Davis signed landmark legislation to combat global warming, putting California at the forefront of a worldwide effort to reduce greenhouse gases. Assembly Bill 1493 requires the California Air Resources Board to develop carbon pollution (greenhouse gas) standards for vehicles in model year 2009 and beyond. Continued global warming could have negative impacts on California's health, environment, communities and economy.

In March 2002, the American Lung Association of Sacramento honored Caltrans with its Clean Air Award for Government for initiating a five-year program to green its fleet. The program is intended to modify the majority of

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Caltrans' 14,000 vehicles to use cleaner-burning engines and fuels, or convert to electric, hybrid, and solar power.

THE CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2025 VISION

California has a safe, sustainable transportation system that is environmentally sound, socially equitable, economically viable and developed through collaboration; it provides for the mobility and accessibility of people, goods, services and information through an integrated, multimodal network.

The CTP provides a vision of sustainability and adopts guiding principles to reach the vision. Overarching these principles is the "system" concept. Transportation policy- and decision-makers cannot view transportation by individual mode. It must be viewed, planned, and operated as an integrated system with complementary modes. Nor can policy- and decision-makers take a narrow geographic approach to transportation. The system must connect effectively between jurisdictions and appear "seamless" to the transportation user.

To develop a seamless, integrated transportation system that offers a high degree of accessibility to California's growing population, the CTP adopts four guiding principles:

- ☐ Collaboration
- ☐ Innovation
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Communication.

COLLABORATION is included in both the vision and the guiding principles to emphasize its level of importance. Transportation planning and programming in California is a complex process shared among multiple public and private entities. It requires collaboration among the transportation providers and governmental entities as well as community-based organizations, urban planners, developers, social, community and emergency service providers, the environmental and business communities, permitting agencies, system users, and others. All of these voices must be heard and considered in order to achieve an integrated transportation system that promotes economic vitality and community goals.

While collaboration may take substantial time and effort, it is essential to selecting and completing transportation projects that best meet current and future local, regional, and state needs. If meaningful communication is not achieved early during transportation planning and continued through project development, projects could be delayed due to legal action. Reaching consensus early will facilitate timely project completion.

To help ensure community participation, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) is sponsoring a series of Vital Community Forums. The Forums are designed to provide participants with the tools they will need to

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help their community through civic engagement. The Forums bring together state representatives with community leaders, local government officials, and business, industry, educational, nonprofit, and community organization leaders to discuss how they can collaborate to create more vital and economically healthy communities.

There also must be collaboration among policy makers to ensure policy harmonization. For example, if a community or region adopts a policy to relieve roadway congestion by offering convenient and reliable transit, the land-use policies should support transit service.

The draft CTP was developed through consultation with state, regional, and tribal governments, and in collaboration with local officials, community-based organizations, and a multitude of stakeholders. It involved land-use, environmental, transit, highway, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, shippers, the business community, and the public. The objective was to build consensus regarding the transportation vision, principles, goals, and strategies that will guide transportation decisions and investments over the next two decades.

LEADERSHIP means defining the transportation vision, working toward the vision, taking risks to reach the vision, and inspiring and encouraging others to embrace the vision.

INNOVATION is the creativity, ability, and flexibility to develop, test, and implement new solutions.

COMMUNICATION is the exchange of information and ideas. Communication involves both expressing and receiving ideas and information, and striving to understand and relate to the concerns of others.

Providing Mobility and Accessibility

The transportation vision includes the concepts of mobility and accessibility. It is important to understand mobility and accessibility, and their relationship to transportation, in order to understand the goals, policies and strategies outlined in the CTP.

MOBILITY is the potential for movement. It is affected by the cost of transportation and the transportation system available. It is also affected by personal limitations, both financial and physical. As the cost of transportation increases, mobility decreases. In addition, if one's options are limited due to physical disability, mobility decreases. However, movement is generally not an end in itself, but a means to access services, activities, and markets.

"We must foster policies and initiatives that make the infrastructure building blocks work together. The new millennium home, for example, must be affordable, energy-efficient, technology-enabled, and close to mass transportation. Our thinking must be as integrated as our lives."

MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET, Secretary
Business, Transportation and Housing
Agency

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ACCESSIBILITY is measured by the time and ease with which destinations can be reached. One may access a destination by actual movement or by "virtual" movement using communication systems such as the Internet, telephone, video, or teleconference systems. Accessibility is affected by distance, connectivity, congestion, transportation and communication options, and physical capabilities. Thus, it incorporates the characteristics of mobility, plus the factors of time and ease.

Accessibility may be influenced by many factors, including urban form and street design. For example, the traditional grid street pattern has numerous options for getting from point A to point B. However, late 20th Century residential developments often include circuitous street patterns with cul-de-sacs, may be surrounded by walls, and often have limited entry points. Thus, while movement or mobility is still possible, the new development pattern reduces accessibility because it limits options, decreases ease, and likely adds time to get from one point to another.

Accessibility is of utmost importance to the economy. Businesses, as well as consumers and the labor force, rely on quick access to airports, seaports, rail lines, and major highways. If access to destinations and markets is not reliable, firms may choose to go elsewhere.

Transportation system performance can be measured by the mobility and accessibility it provides the user. The CTP proposes goals, policies, and strategies to enhance California's accessibility over the next two decades. It builds on current activities and policies and proposes new approaches to make the system safer and more efficient, and to provide more transportation choices.

THE SYSTEM

To many, transportation means the roadway system, but it is much more. It is also transit, bicycle, pedestrian, maintenance and communication facilities, railways, air, sea and space-ports, pipelines, and the public and privately owned vehicles that use them. Californians use the transportation system each day to access employment, education, shops, medical services, and to participate in social and recreational opportunities. Our transportation system is the network that connects our local, state and national economies, and allows us to efficiently move people, goods, and information from place to place.

TRENDS

California is the most populous state in the nation and is expected to increase by 33 percent in the first two decades of the 21st century. The state's population is also the most ethnically diverse. While the state's growth and diversity adds to California's economic strength and vibrancy, it also confronts policy-makers with a multitude of social, economic, environmental, and transportation challenges. Transportation is an integral part of the social and

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economic fabric of California. It cannot be examined without considering population growth and demographics, changing travel behavior, safety, employment, housing, land-use, the economy, technology, the environment, community values, individual opportunity, and funding. The CTP explores the impact of projected trends and demographics on transportation.

Transportation influences the shape of our communities. In the 20th Century, urbanization has been accompanied by increasing decentralization within cities (or urban sprawl). This decentralization is supported by a series of transportation innovations, streetcars, automobiles, subways, and urban and commuter rail services that make longer daily trips possible.

As employment centers moved from the central city to the suburbs and edge cities in the late 20th Century, jobs became less accessible to inner-city residents, especially the urban poor. The problem is made more complex by the fact that relatively few suburban jobs are well served by public transit, and many urban residents are without cars. The CTP explores the changes in urban form and their impacts on travel behavior, transportation demand, and the environment.

California is the fifth-largest economy in the world. Our economic status is dependent upon the accessibility of people and goods within the state, as well as to other states and countries. California's Pacific Rim and North America Free Trade Agreement location are an economic blessing, and a security and traffic challenge. The CTP explores options for meeting the projected increase in demand for goods movement.

Adequate and flexible funding is one of the greatest challenges in providing a transportation system that offers a high degree of accessibility to all Californians and the efficient movement of goods. The primary source of transportation revenue is the excise tax collected on each gallon of gas. Its value is steadily diminishing because this tax has not kept pace with inflation. The estimated additional \$1.4 billion to be made available annually by the Governor's TCRP and the voter's approval of Proposition 42 will help reverse decades of disinvestments. However, it will not entirely bridge the gap between future transportation demand and revenue. The CTP offers strategies for maximizing existing resources and securing more flexible additional transportation revenue.

GOALS

The following goals were developed based on based on consultation with numerous public and private transportation providers and concerns expressed by Californians during the early public outreach effort. The goals, while identified and discussed as separate issues, are interdependent. (For example, if the system is not well maintained, the level of mobility will decline.)

Each of the following goals support one or more concepts contained in the vision for California's transportation system:

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- Goal 1. ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY** - Ensuring the safety and security of people, goods, information, and services in all modes of transportation. Integrating new technologies when designing system infrastructure and developing coordinated security and response plans.
- Goal 2. PRESERVE THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM** - Maintaining and rehabilitating California's extensive transportation system to preserve it for future generations.
- Goal 3. IMPROVE MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY** - Expanding the system and enhancing modal choices and connectivity to meet the state's future transportation demands.
- Goal 4. MAXIMIZE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES** - Planning and providing transportation services while protecting our environment and historical and cultural assets. Maximizing the efficient use of resources including land and energy consumption.
- Goal 5. REFLECT COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES** - Finding transportation solutions that balance and integrate community, aesthetic, and environmental values with transportation safety and performance.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

The following seven policies are developed to support the Goals identified above and to respond to concerns expressed by the public and stakeholders, while being mindful of future trends and challenges. The policies may support more than one goal.

- Policy 1.** Expand opportunities for early and ongoing collaboration during the planning and decision-making processes.
- Policy 2.** Maintain, manage, and preserve a safe and secure transportation system.
- Policy 3.** Develop, manage, and operate an efficient, inter-connected, and intermodal transportation system.
- Policy 4.** Manage growth and conserve resources.
- Policy 5.** Enhance capacity and provide viable transportation choices.
- Policy 6.** Provide additional and more flexible transportation financing.
- Policy 7.** Support research to advance mobility and accessibility.

The policies are designed to preserve the transportation system and provide mobility and accessibility for California's growing population while enhancing the environment, economy, and social equity of California. The CTP offers a number of implementing strategies designed to realize California's transportation vision and goals.

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RURAL ISSUES

Rural issues, while as acute as those in urban areas, have very different characteristics. With only eight percent of California's population, rural areas comprise 94 percent of the land area. Providing transportation services to a sparsely and widely distributed population presents special transportation challenges that must be considered when planning for a balanced, interconnected system. California's economy relies on rural agricultural products, timber, and tourism, and consequently, the rural and interregional road system.

Rural transportation issues vary depending on the area's economic base, topography, or proximity to urban areas and tourist destinations. If located adjacent to an urban area, the rural jurisdiction might receive a "spill over" of big city problems, such as traffic and air pollution, but not receive sufficient resources needed to address those issues. The CTP explores some of the issues facing rural transportation providers and offers policies and strategies to address them.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures serve to indicate progress toward identified goals; to inform decision-making on transportation issues and opportunities; to provide a point of departure for policy and program analysis; to evaluate system conditions and strategies; to enable monitoring and problem identification; and to contribute to the integration of economic, social, and environmental factors during the planning and early decision-making processes.

Performance measures consist of a set of objective, measurable criteria used to evaluate the performance of the transportation system and to gauge if and to what degree our vision and goals are being achieved. Transportation planners and providers must make sure they are using the appropriate performance measures and that the data is reliable. For example, past transportation efficiency may have been measured by the number of vehicles flowing through the system. This assumed that increased vehicle throughput was the desired outcome. However, if enhanced mobility and accessibility is the objective, measuring the accessibility of people, goods, and services makes more sense.

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Upon approval of the CTP, Caltrans will initiate development of an Action Plan that will present specific steps to implement the strategies proposed in this document. Building on our mutual commitments and capitalizing on our successes, the Action Plan will identify measurable objectives, roles and responsibilities, timelines, estimated costs, and targeted outcomes. Caltrans will also develop a method to monitor progress toward the goals, and a reporting system and schedule.

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The CTP is a plan for all of California. Developing and implementing the Action Plan will require considerable coordination and collaboration with regional transportation planning agencies, local and regional officials, other governmental entities, tribal governments, business, communities, and system users. The participants in this effort will vary depending on the strategy being addressed.

Objectives and priorities may vary based on regional goals. It will be the state's responsibility to help sort through these varying goals and ensure that interregional state transportation goals are addressed and cross-jurisdictional issues are considered.

Work has already begun on developing the Action Plan. Preliminary research and identification of stakeholders is currently underway. It is anticipated that the Action Plan will be completed within one year of the Governor's approval of the CTP.